



# STATE REPRESENTATIVE **BETH MEYERS**

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## Rep Meyers' Report to the 74<sup>th</sup>

### *My First Year in the Legislature*

As my first year in the State Assembly comes to a close and 2016 approaches, it's a good time to look back on the ups and downs of the Legislature's actions during the session so far.

One year after I arrived in Madison, my constituents are telling me the same thing they told me during the campaign and during the budget process – they want both parties to work together to solve the problems facing Wisconsin, from job creation to protecting public education to fixing our structural deficit. Unfortunately, the Majority Party has instead used much of the legislative session to push through political power grabs, erode local control, and do further damage to education and infrastructure, all while borrowing recklessly and reducing potential prosperity of future generations.

The state budget is the most important piece of legislation that we vote on in the State Legislature, and I am disappointed to say the 2015-17 budget passed on a party line vote was irresponsible and inadequate.

It included an egregious provision stripping local communities of their authority to regulate shoreland zoning, a one-size-fits-all approach that obstructs local efforts to protect lakes and waterways. It also mandated that revenues from Wisconsin's room tax be diverted, interfering with the 74<sup>th</sup> District's thriving tourism industry. The budget also brushed aside Northern Wisconsin's road maintenance needs, the Majority Party unwilling to fund our district's infrastructure despite recklessly borrowing hundreds of millions of dollars for other purposes. Finally, the budget harmed our future by cutting a quarter billion dollars from our world-class university system and diverting millions of taxpayer dollars from public schools to unaccountable private schools.

Sadly, the state budget wasn't the only bad piece of legislation that passed this year. Recently the Majority Party pushed through highly partisan bills that eliminated the Government Accountability Board, (our state's nonpartisan election watchdog), allows for more money with less transparency for political campaigns, and limited tools for fighting political corruption.

Although many legislative actions this year unfortunately took Wisconsin in the wrong direction, there were also some bright spots and proposals I was proud to support. For example, I was

proud to co-author and vote for a bipartisan bill protecting the Great Lakes by banning the use of microbeads, tiny pieces of plastic that absorb pollutants and pose serious risks to aquatic environments and human health. I also introduced my first piece of legislation back in February, providing funding for farm to school programs that benefit school children and Wisconsin's agricultural community.

More recently, I was proud to be appointed to the Speaker's Taskforce on Alzheimer's and Dementia, which will study and make recommendations on policies that can improve care and raise awareness of these important issues. With the increasing cost of care and the growing population of older adults, this taskforce is extremely important for Northern Wisconsin. Aging is universal and we're all in this together.

Going forward, I will continue to work to help create family supporting jobs, boost wages, improve education, support the elderly community, and promote tourism and transportation infrastructure in our district. I won't give up on working for the people of Wisconsin and the 74<sup>th</sup> District, and I know families across the state who are struggling to get ahead won't give up either.

I've travelled thousands of miles throughout the 74<sup>th</sup> District this year to be at the schools, businesses, and homes of my constituents. My goal was and always will be to hear your concerns. Please contact my office with your thoughts and concerns about the direction of our state and about how we can achieve these goals.